



**Testimony Submitted to the Joint Committee on Education  
In Support of S.267/H.591 An Act regarding breakfast after the bell  
By Palma McLaughlin, LWVMA Child and Family Specialist  
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The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts represents 47 local Leagues across the state from the Berkshires to Cape Cod. We strongly support this breakfast after the bell legislation, which would ensure that all students in low-income districts will start the day ready to learn.

Hungry students are not ready to learn. Nearly half of all students and up to 60% of teenagers regularly skip breakfast. About 150,000 Massachusetts students in low-income districts don't eat breakfast. This legislation would mandate that low-income districts provide additional opportunities for students to eat breakfast at school.

Students who eat breakfast can concentrate in class. They have better attendance records and higher test scores. Teachers notice that students are more alert, less disruptive, and better prepared to engage in learning. Nurses record fewer visits by these students. One model, Breakfast in the Classroom, gives teachers time to take attendance, collect paperwork, and check in with students.

There are long-term benefits for students from this added breakfast program, including higher graduation rates, better preparation for college and the workforce, and reductions in the achievement gap. Additionally, adolescents who get into the habit of eating breakfast have lower rates of chronic conditions including diabetes and obesity as adults.

Harried parents have peace of mind that, if the bus is late or their teenager isn't ready to eat so early in the morning, their children will not be hungry all day. The Second Chance and Grab and Go breakfast options work particularly well for high school students since school often starts before they are ready for breakfast.

Eligible districts could qualify for as much as \$30 million dollars in additional federal funds if school breakfast participation increases. These funds can be used for equipment purchases and upgrades and to hire additional staff.

Breakfast after the bell has across-the-board benefits for students and schools.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts urges you to support S.267/H.591 An Act regarding breakfast after the bell.

Thank you for your consideration.